

BETTY McCOLLUM
4TH DISTRICT, MINNESOTA

1714 LONGWORTH HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING
WASHINGTON, DC 20515
(202) 225-6631
FAX: (202) 225-1968

165 WESTERN AVENUE NORTH
SUITE 17
ST. PAUL, MN 55102
(651) 224-9191
FAX: (651) 224-3056

www.house.gov/mccollum



UNITED STATES
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS
SUBCOMMITTEE ON LABOR, HEALTH AND
HUMAN SERVICES, EDUCATION
SUBCOMMITTEE ON LEGISLATIVE BRANCH
SUBCOMMITTEE ON STATE DEPARTMENT
AND FOREIGN OPERATIONS
COMMITTEE ON THE BUDGET
SENIOR DEMOCRATIC WHIP
CONGRESSIONAL GLOBAL
HEALTH CAUCUS, CO-FOUNDER

Congresswoman Betty McCollum
Statement for the Record
Commemorating Veterans Day
November 6, 2009

Ms. McCollum: Madame Speaker, I rise today to commemorate Veterans Day and applaud the commitment and work of this Congress and President Obama to meet the needs of America's 23.4 million military veterans. Nearly 400,000 veterans call the great state of Minnesota home and we are proud of them, our friends and neighbors. As a Member of Congress and the daughter of a World War II veteran, I believe I have a duty to honor the men and women who have so courageously served our country by investing in expanding educational opportunities, health care services, and access to good jobs for our nation's veterans.

Increasingly, I have become particularly concerned about the mental health issues, such as post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and traumatic brain injury (TBI), that afflict our warriors who are now home from Iraq and Afghanistan. PTSD and TBI have claimed too many lives and caused too much hardship among the families of veterans. According to the Department of Veterans Affairs, service members responding to mental health questions when they return from Iraq and Afghanistan show that about 19% of service members from Iraq have a mental health problem, while about 11% from Afghanistan have a mental health problem. Too often the unseen wounds suffered by veterans, as a result of PTSD and TBI, remain untreated until a crisis or tragedy occurs for the veteran or their loved ones. Illnesses related to substance abuse, suicide prevention, and homelessness prevention for our veterans are often directly related to psychological trauma. I believe it is critical to support the expanded efforts by the Department of Defense and the Department of Veterans Affairs to ensure our soldiers understand clearly that mental health services and help are available if, and when, they need them.

On this Veterans Day, I am very proud to live in a country that so values its veterans. My commitment and my prayers are with the millions of veterans and their families who we owe a tremendous debt of gratitude.

I yield back the balance of my time.